

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF FAIRMONT URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY IN SUPPORT OF KEEPING THE LOCKS ON THE UPPER MONONGAHELA RIVER OPEN

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the decline in industrial river commerce, the Upper Monongahela River and its tributaries exert a significant influence on the City of Fairmont's economy and the economy of the entire region, including the economies of Marion County, Monongalia County and the City of Morgantown, and industries, commerce and recreation that depend on the river are impacted by the maintenance and condition of the locks, dams and channels maintained by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers;

WHEREAS, current and future investment and river related activities are heavily influenced by the above and require the free and timely passage through them;

WHEREAS, any significant reduction in lock operations or their maintenance or uncertainty surrounding them will have a serious, and preventable, long term negative impact on recreational activities, commerce, and investments in the City of Fairmont and the entirety of North Central West Virginia;

WHEREAS, the decline in industrial river commerce has resulted in substantial cutbacks in federal funding for maintenance and operation of locks and dams on low use rivers, including the Upper Monongahela River in West Virginia, and the Upper Allegheny River in Pennsylvania, causing the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, via the *Inland Marine Transportation System Levels of Service Guide, March 2012*, to determine that certain locks and dams on the Upper Monongahela River in West Virginia will be closed or access to them severely restricted beginning 1 November 2012, such that: 1) the Morgantown Lock will operate one shift per day, weekends and holidays only; and 2) the Hildebrand and Opekiska Locks will be commercial lockages by appointment only- no recreational lockages;

WHEREAS, such a significant reduction in lock operations and maintenance will isolate the region from water transportation and have a serious long term negative impact on recreational activities, commerce, industry, and investment in the City of Fairmont and North Central West Virginia;

WHEREAS, the federal government, through the executive and legislative branches, has the ability to continue to maintain and operate the system of locks and dams on the Upper Monongahela River by:

- a. Providing a reasonable level of funding to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineer; and
- b. Permitting the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to work innovatively with the State, local governments, business organizations, and river recreation entities to provide alternative solutions for the operation of the locks.

WHEREAS, local citizens working, through the Upper Monongahela River Association (UMRA), advocate for federal resources to protect, maintain, and operate safe locks and dams to support local commerce, recreation and economic development.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Fairmont Urban Renewal Authority calls upon Congress and the President to support (1) authorization and funding for studies of how the federal government might partner with states and local governments to find innovative ways to fund and operate river navigation facilities and services; and 2) the long-standing recommendation of UMRA in coordination with the Pittsburgh District U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to add support of recreational boating, fishing and other river based recreational and similar economic development activities to its mission and duties regarding the operation of navigable rivers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City of Fairmont Urban Renewal Authority urges that the following additional specific actions, which have been presented by UMRA and others to the Pittsburgh District U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, be undertaken as interim solutions in lieu of the planned closure of the locks which serve the Upper Monongahela River in West Virginia which closure is slated for 1 November 2012 until a permanent solution to keep the locks open for river commerce, economic development, and river recreation is put forward by the federal government:

1. Operate the Upper Monongahela River locks for 45 days during the 1 April through 31 October recreational boating season. It is recommended that three day weekend operations be scheduled for Friday through Sunday, and on holidays, thus facilitating fishing tournaments which are of great economic benefit to the region and which would allow recreational boaters full access to the River. This mode of operation would exercise the locks to ensure they remain operable.

2. Authorize the use of contractual, temporary, part-time or seasonal employees or even auxiliary volunteer methods to provide lock operators other than permanent Pittsburgh District COE employees and evaluate the possibility of a Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District Auxiliary, to provide, train, and certify volunteer lock operators. This auxiliary, modeled after the successful Coast Guard Auxiliary system, could undertake other assistance to Pittsburgh District missions.

3. Investigate innovative ways to fund operation of the locks by considering, among others, creating an Upper Mon Port Authority that governments and businesses, others could join and contribute funds for running the locks. This approach would possibly require Congressional action.

4. Fully maintain by the Pittsburgh District U. S. Army Corp of Engineers the Upper Mon locks and dams upon closure in order to provide public safety as well as protection of the facilities so that in the future these facilities can be quickly returned to service, when political, recreational and/or business factors require that the locks be reopened.

5. Maintain the nine foot channel depth on the river so that dams and boat ramps will not be allowed to be silted in.

6. Provide a public boat ramp access to the Hildebrand pool.
7. Provide an alternate public boat ramp access to the Morgantown pool, which is less susceptible to silting than the Uffington Boat Ramp.
8. Dredge or relocate the Prickett's Fort boat public launch ramp as all boat ramps are important to bass tournaments.
9. Provide a means at the upper Mon locks for portage of canoes, kayaks, and other small boats, around the locks.
10. Establish fishing platform access at the Morgantown Lock & Dam on the south approach wall to the dam.
11. Provide a walk path access to the river bank from the rail trail on the Morgantown side of the river from the Morgantown Lock & Dam down to Decker's Creek.
12. Classify WV Division of Natural Resources lockages as commercial lockages.
13. Exercise the operation of locks and dams sufficiently to limit closure impact on fish mobility on the river and to permit survival of mussels.
14. Explore the possibility of remote control of lockages at three upper Mon locks from the Point Marion lock and dam.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately.

Passed this 11th day of September, 2012


Chairman